



Jolene Ivey
Chair
Council District 5

"Serving the People of Prince George's County!"

April 30, 2024

The Honorable Angela Alsobrooks
Office of the County Executive
1301 McCormick Lane, 4th Floor
Largo, MD 20774

Dear County Executive Alsobrooks,

I am writing this letter to urgently advocate for UM Capital Region Health's Adult Sickle Cell Clinic's \$185,250 funding request for the addition of a specialized transfusion machine. Prince George's County, home to the largest sickle cell population in Maryland, with an estimated 1,600 people affected, 1,000 of whom are adults, is in immediate need of this crucial medical equipment. The Clinic, the sole facility in Prince George's County dedicated to treating adults living with sickle cell disease (SCD), is currently unable to offer this life-saving service.

Prior to the opening of the UM Capital Region Health Adult Sickle Cell Clinic in 2023, adults experiencing a sickle cell pain crisis had to travel to Baltimore or Washington, DC, to seek care. The Clinic offers Prince George's County residents living with SCD access to needed care without having to leave the county. The Clinic and its social services partners have served 304 clients to date. The Clinic is currently seeing three new patients every week and providing routine SCD care to 125 patients. These are all patients who previously were leaving the county for care or were treated in area emergency departments, often resulting in hospitalizations.

The Clinic's inability to offer a specialized blood transfusion service called automated red blood cell exchange, where the patient's blood is completely replaced with donated blood, is a significant gap in patient care. This special transfusion, which requires a device called an Apheresis machine, is crucial for patients in significant pain. Currently, these patients must travel to Baltimore or Washington, DC for care. As the UM Capital Region program expands, it is projected that 50 to 60 patients will require this transfusion monthly, underscoring the urgent need for the Apheresis machine.

Children's National Hospital (CNH) Prince George's Pediatric Outpatient Center, which has the county's largest pediatric SCD population with over 1,500 clinic visits over the past 3 years, has begun transitioning its Sickle Cell patients to UM Capital Region Health's Adult Sickle Cell Clinic. Since some of the CNH Sickle Cell patients are already receiving automated red blood cell exchanges for prevention of serious complications, having an Apheresis machine is not just important, but critical to sustaining the same level of care for their patients transitioning to UM Capital Region.

The funding request of \$185,250 covers the cost of an Apheresis machine to provide this important service to Prince George's County adults living with SCD. It also includes additional funding to support the relocation of the current clinic to a larger, more comfortable, and convenient location within UM Capital Region Medical Center, where the Apheresis machine will be installed.

The Prince George's County Council enthusiastically supports this funding request to expand access to care for sickle cell patients in their community.

Sincerely,

Jolene Ivey,
Chair, Prince George's County Council
District 5